

Azerbaijan



Shi'a Muslim Activists

Shi'a Muslim religious activists who are members of the unregistered Muslim Unity Movement (MUM) are frequently targeted with fabricated charges of drug possession or drug trafficking. Human rights defenders characterize the government's targeting of MUM members as politically motivated due to the group's criticism of official religious policies.



Shahin Gadirov

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Shi'a Muslim

ARRESTED:

November 23, 2022

NATURE OF CHARGES:

Drug Trafficking

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Religious Association



Ahsan Nuruzade

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Shi'a Muslim

ARRESTED:

October 6, 2017

SENTENCE:

7 Years' Imprisonment

NATURE OF CHARGES:

Drug Trafficking

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Religious Association



Razi Humbatov

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Shi'a Muslim

ARRESTED:

July 7, 2021

SENTENCE:

6 Years' Imprisonment

REPORTS OF TORTURE:

Yes

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Online Activity, Religious Association



Elshan Abbasov

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Shi'a Muslim

ARRESTED:

March 3, 2022

NATURE OF CHARGES:

Drug Trafficking

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Religious Association, Religious Instruction and Teaching

Jehovah's Witnesses

The government periodically detains and imprisons Jehovah's Witnesses who conscientiously object to mandatory military service in accordance with their religious beliefs. Although the Azerbaijani constitution permits a civilian alternative, authorities have not offered one in practice.

FoRB Victims List Stats

11 out of 2,125

Religion or Belief	# of Victims
Shi'a	9
Jehovah's Witnesses	2
Total	11

Type of Abuse	# of Victims
Imprisoned	7
Detained	4
Total	11

Average Prison Sentence

8 Years

Reports of	# of Victims
Torture	2
Medical Neglect	0
Total	2

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Frank R. Wolf FoRB Victims List Background

The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA), as amended by the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016, requires USCIRF to:

make publicly available, to the extent practicable...lists of persons it determines are imprisoned or detained, have disappeared, been placed under house arrest, been tortured, or subjected to forced renunciation of faith for their religious activity or religious freedom advocacy by the government of a foreign country that the Commission recommends for designation as a country of particular concern [CPC]...or by a nonstate actor that the Commission recommends for designation as an entity of particular concern [EPC].

USCIRF developed the Frank R. Wolf Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) Victims List—an online public database—to implement this provision for countries USCIRF recommends for Country of Particular Concern (CPC) or Special Watch List (SWL) status. The list also includes such victims located in the de facto territories of nonstate actors that USCIRF recommends for Entity of Particular Concern (EPC) status, according to the same criteria.

Due to limited resources, USCIRF is unable to identify and document all victims that meet the statutory requirement to be included on the FoRB Victims List and generally relies on receiving submissions from outside individuals and organizations. As such, the information contained in the database does not reflect country, regional, or global trends. Furthermore, percentages highlighted in this section should not be used for extrapolation purposes nor interpreted as a particular group experiencing greater violations than another or a particular country committing violations at a greater rate than others. To support this project, USCIRF invites those with credible information on victims to submit information using the Victims List Intake Form at www.uscifr.gov/form/uscifr-victims-list-intake-form.

FoRB Victims List Stats Overall

Perpetrator	Victims Documented
Algeria	5
Azerbaijan	11
Burma	5
China	770
Cuba	11
Egypt	18
Eritrea	50
Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)	2
Houthis	3
India	55
Indonesia	8
Iran	339
Iraq	2
Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)	1
Kazakhstan	15
Malaysia	4
Nicaragua	15
Nigeria	9
North Korea	9
Pakistan	90
Russia	449
Saudi Arabia	46
Sri Lanka	1
Tajikistan	13
Turkmenistan	30
Uzbekistan	87
Vietnam	77
Total	2,125

Religion or Belief	Victims Documented
Adivasi	1
Baha'i	163
Bon	1
Buddhist – Hoa Hao	6
Buddhist – Theravada	3
Buddhist – Tibetan	76
Buddhist – Unspecified/Other	28
Christian – Catholic	46
Christian – Church of Almighty God	236
Christian – Jehovah's Witness	258
Christian – Orthodox	17
Christian – Protestant	130
Christian – Unspecified/Other	66
Duong Van Minh	4
ECKist (Eckankar)	1
Erfan-e Halgheh Practitioner	2
Falun Gong	213
Hindu	10
Humanist	1
Jewish	1
Muslim – Ahmadiyya	23
Muslim – Qur'anist	1
Muslim – Shi'a	39
Muslim – Sufi	63
Muslim – Sunni	385
Muslim – Unspecified/Other	237
Santeria	5
Scientologist	1
Shaman	1
Sikh	1
Yarsani	37
Unknown/Unspecified	69
Total	2,125

Azerbaijan



Not Released

Elshan Abbasov
Shahin Gadirov
Shamkhal Eyvazov
Ahsan Nuruzade
Razi Humbatov

Released

Royal Karimov
Elshan Mustafaoglu
Movsum Samadov
Seymur Mammadov

Unknown

Abqul Suleymanov
Elvin Muradov